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THE TRAGIC MIGRATION--SCHOOL DROPOUTS.

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DESCRIPTORS- SLOW LEARNERS, *DROPOUTS, *ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED, PARENT ROLE, TEACHER ROLE, *FAMILY INFLUENCE, HOMEMAKING EDUCATION, *DROPOUT PREVENTION, ASPIRATION, MIDDLE CLASS, EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT,

INFORMATION ABOUT DROPOUTS IS PRESENTED FOR STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS WITH THE HOPE OF INITIATING DISCUSSION, PLANNING, AND ACTION TO FORESTALL THE PROBLEM. OF THE 26 MILLION YOUTH WHO WILL ENTER THE LABOR FORCE BETWEEN 1960 AND 1970, 5.2 MILLION OR 20.2 PERCENT WILL NOT COMPLETE HIGH SCHOOL. THE PROBLEM IS DISCUSSED UNDER THE TOPICS (1) "FAMILY INFLUENCE ON SCHOOL FAILURE" WHICH EXPLORES THE CULTURE OF POVERTY AND THE MIDDLE CLASS EFFECT, (2) "READINESS--A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY" WHICH DISCUSSES THE JOB OF THE HOME, SCHOOL, AND THE TEACHER AND THE INFLUENCE OF THE FAMILY, SCHOOL, COMMUNITY, AND PEER GROUP IN FOSTERING ASPIRATIONS, (3) "EMERGING CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE SCHOOL" WHICH MAKES RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING CURRICULUM REVISION, GRADING CONCEPTS, ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL, AND LEARNING AND INSTRUCTION, AND (4) "UNIQUE ROLE OF THE HOME ECONOMIST" WHICH DESCRIBES SCHOOL AND NEIGHBORHOOD PROGRAMS AND MAKES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONTINUING ACTIVITIES IN IMPROVING HOMEMAKING SKILLS, COMMUNITY-SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS, PARENTHOOD EDUCATION, RELEVANCE OF CLASSROOM INTRUCTION. A BIBLIOGRAPHY IS INCLUDED. THIS DOCUMENT IS AVAILABLE FOR 75 CENTS FROM DEPARTMENT OF HOME ECONOMICS, NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION, 1201 SIXTEENTH STREET, N.W., WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036. (MM)

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THE TRAGIC MIGRATION

SCHOOL DROPOUTS

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DEPARTMENT OF HOME ECONOMICS
NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

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FOREWORD

Education today faces no problem more insidious than its failure each year to retain the multitude of youth who drop out before graduating from high school. The magnitude of this tragedy has prompted the National Education Association's Department of Home Economics to deviate from its practice of providing bulletins designed exclusively for its membership in order to offer a publication that considers the implications of school dropouts for all educators, parents, and community leaders.

To write this text, the Department sought an authority versed in the factors precipitating school failure and dropout; one who could transform facts and statistics into an understandable document of motivation and direction. Fortunately, a writer was found who had already won the respect of teachers throughout the country; one who also had shown an understanding of home economics as a contributing discipline in education, having spoken to home economics conferences and written for the *Journal of Home Economics*—Robert D. Strom.

Dr. Strom, now an associate professor of education at Ohio State University, served as assistant director of the NEA Project: School Dropouts during 1963-64. He has written numerous articles for professional journals and is co-editor with Dr. E. Paul Torrance of a new book, *Mental Health and Achievement: Increasing Potential and Reducing School Dropout.* His background training in educational psychology, experience as a teacher, and youthful point of view serve to give him the great understanding demonstrated in the pages of this booklet.

Dr. Strom's manuscript is of such compelling information and such universal application that the Department of Home Economics desires to share this view of the urgent need to focus attention on the problems of early school leavers. We earnestly hope this booklet will be read and reread by students, teachers, and school administrators—all segments of education—and that the information will initiate many discussions and much practical planning and be translated into immediate action to forestall this great tragedy, school dropout.

Katherine R. Conafay
President, DHE/NEA

INTRODUCTION

The Road Not Taken

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.
—Robert Frost, "The Road Not Taken"

There was a time when it mattered less what road a person chose in life, for many paths held promise of success. But today the traveled road of education, be it preparation for vocation, training for a skill, or learning to be what one might become, makes all the difference. Knowing this, educators are justly concerned about the annual loss of 700,000 students—"the dropouts"—those who have chosen the road less traveled.

The choice to migrate from student status before graduating from high school is rarely without purpose. Most youngsters who drop out really believe that an indeterminate destination in adult society will prove more satisfying than their present position. What makes their journey tragic is that the destination is very often unemployment. The unemployment rate for dropouts today is 15 percent; for high school graduates, 9 percent. That almost all sectors of the economy now require extensive training for work positions is shown by recent reports from—

> New York City, where there are 54,000 white-collar jobs unfilled for lack of qualified applicants, while 77,000 unemployed out-of-school youth are unable to find work.
>
> Chicago, where 285,000 persons are on public assistance, over half of whom cannot read at the eighth-grade level. The monthly relief allocation granted these people is in excess of 16 million dollars.
>
> West Virginia, where approximately half of the 76,000 unemployed cannot be retrained and cannot qualify for jobs because of general educational deficiencies.

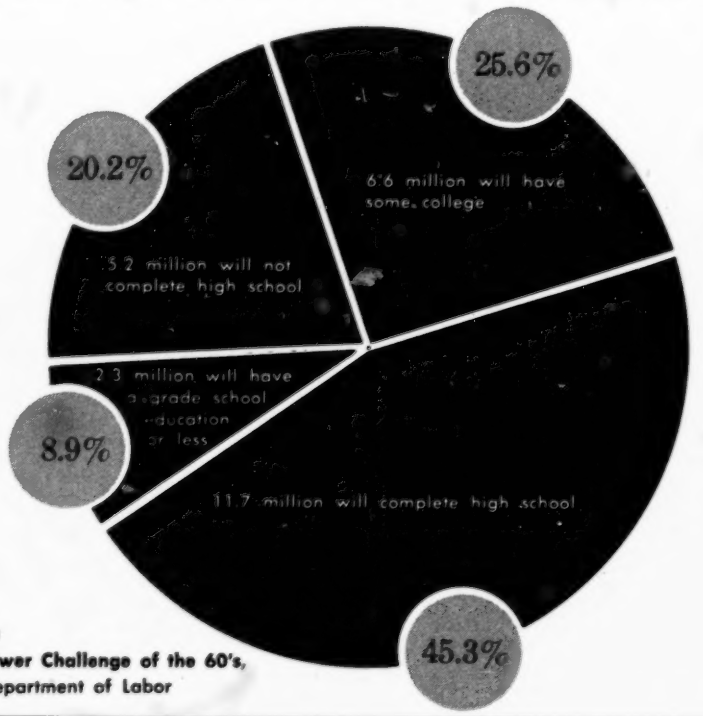
This problem did not exist during the early years of this century. At that time there was little cause for consternation when a teenager announced his intention to quit the reading, writing, and arithmetic factory. A dropout was not looked upon with dis-

favor, because some 90 percent of the working population were persons whose secondary education was incomplete. Moreover, it was relatively easy to move from a school situation to employment, as over half the jobs available called for unskilled labor. Today, however, unskilled occupations constitute only 17 percent of work positions in the labor market, with projected figures indicating a decrease to 5 percent by 1970.

These figures suggest the comparative suddenness with which this crisis has developed. Perhaps the most significant factor has been that machines, which at the turn of this century did 6 percent of our work, now do 96 percent. To be sure, machines are cheaper than people; they reduce human relations by reducing personnel; they improve business procedures with almost instant feedback of information; they increase efficiency because distance is not a barrier to control and coordination. But they also displace some 4,000 jobs in this country every week.

Concurrent with a decline in job opportunities for less educated persons is an unprecedented growth in the labor force. During this decade some 26 million young people will enter the world of work, 30 percent of whom will be school dropouts. Since most of this influx is comprised of men and women who have 12 or more

Between 1960 and 1970, 26 million youth will enter the labor force.


25.6%
6.6 million will have some college
20.2%
5.2 million will not complete high school
2.3 million will have 8 grade school education or less
8.9%
11.7 million will complete high school
45.3%

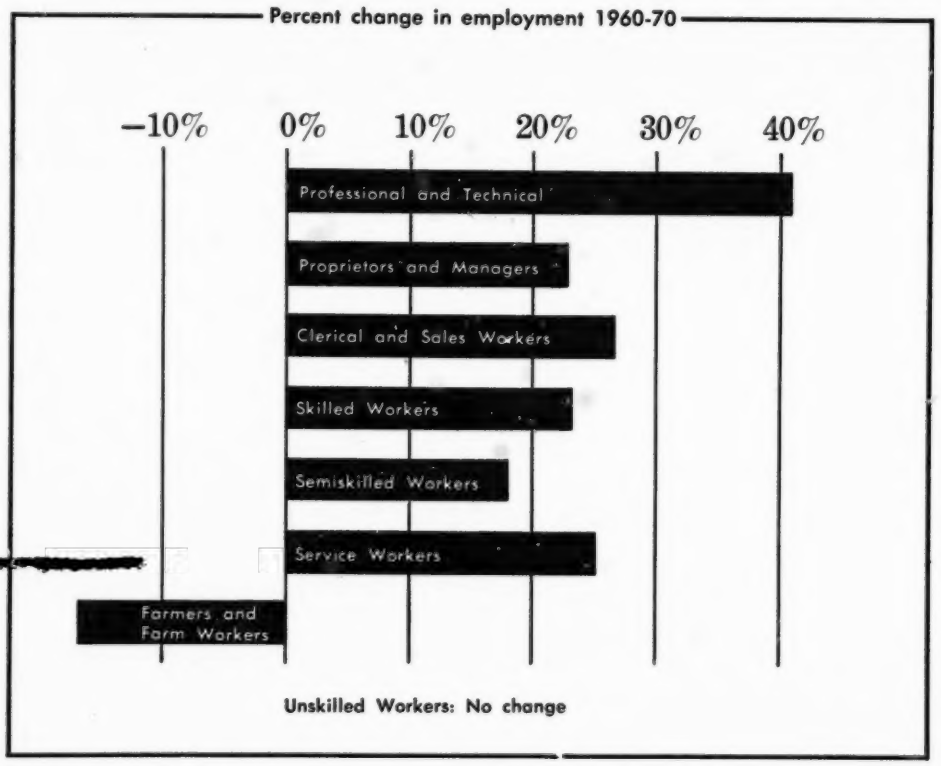
Source:
Manpower Challenge of the 60's,
U.S. Department of Labor

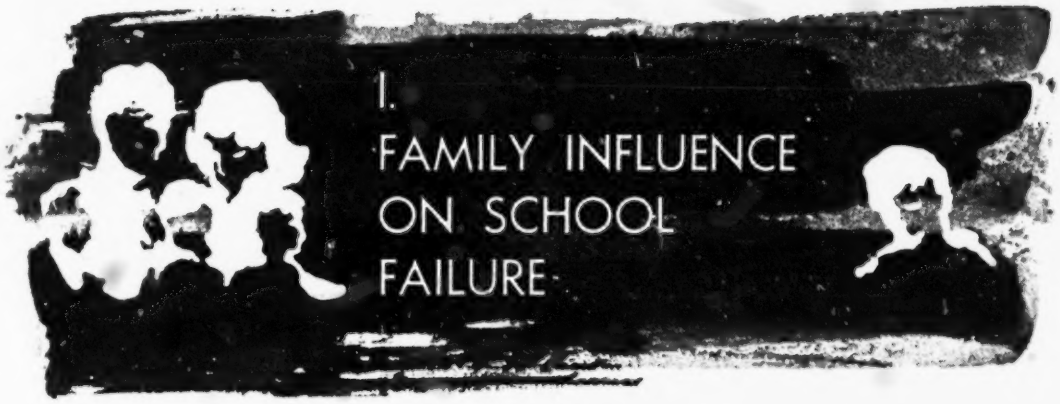
years of formal schooling, it is likely that the 7.5 million without diplomas will be last in line to secure an ever-diminishing number of low-level jobs for which they might be suited.

The U.S. Department of Labor, in its projection of employment prospects for the period 1960-75, anticipates that opportunities available to laborers and unskilled workers will remain the same; agricultural positions will decline by nearly 20 percent. Since time immemorial these types of occupations have been an important source of beginning jobs for young people coming from school.

By contrast, during this decade employment opportunities for professionals and technicians will increase by 40 percent. Gains are also expected in the managerial, skilled, clerical, and service occupations. Rapidly changing careers in the future will require persons equipped for adjustment. It follows that ability to adjust is related to educational preparation.

One major situation is common to the hundreds of thousands of young people who are out of school and out of work. Confronting a world where jobs are scarce and diverse, they are unprepared to fill many of those positions available today and will be less prepared tomorrow as hiring requirements rise.





I. FAMILY INFLUENCE ON SCHOOL FAILURE

Studies designed to assess the impact of social class on adolescents have consistently shown the highest incidence of school failure to occur among children from low-income families. As early as 1941 in his extensive investigation of a Midwestern city, Hollingshead found that by far the largest proportion of dropouts, 8 out of 9, were reared in the poorest of socioeconomic circumstances. These findings were duplicated in the 1950's by McCreary, Kitch, and Young. Most notable among studies completed during the present decade have been those of Bowman and Matthews, who conclude that perhaps 88 percent of today's dropouts are members of lower class homes.

William Capron, senior staff economist for the President's Council of Economic Advisers, recently reported that 20 percent of American families receive incomes of less than $3,000 per year. In these homes are 11 million school-age children, slightly more than one fourth of all youngsters enrolled. These little ones are victims of an environmental trap which tends to impose upon them a lifetime devoid of dignity; the conditions under which they live have become the battleground focus of President Johnson's war on poverty. Therefore, if the reader detects in this report a greater emphasis on the problems of disadvantaged youth, it is purely intentional.

THE CULTURE OF POVERTY

It cannot be denied that where the so-called culture of poverty exists, there are familial tendencies inducing conditions that

foster dropout. Here one finds a high proportion of disrupted and broken homes where the father is often absent and in which an emotional distance between parents results in dilution of affection for the young. Where no father is present during the evening there is usually no organized meal, no organized opportunity for language exchange, no real interaction. A common result is cumulative deficit in the language component of a child's development. Since this deficit is qualitative and not quantitative, it is erroneous to believe these children are characteristically nonverbal.

In the absence of positive paternal guidance for these children, one might hope the female parent could provide compensatory influence. Unfortunately, the facts are otherwise. Indeed, evidence most often points to an inadequacy in the cognitive features of early mother-child exchange that tends to foster later alienation from the educative processes and other basic institutions of society. The pattern of communication that develops between mother and child has a lasting effect upon the youngster's cognitive equipment influencing what he attends to, how he interprets messages, and how he responds. These patterns are not always adaptive or functional for academic situations and may prevent the child from taking advantage of learning experiences available in a classroom.

In recent research, Hess and others at the University of Chicago have considered the problem of maternal competence in preparing children for school. Since middle class children for the most part come to school adequately prepared while their counterparts from poor families are ill-prepared, the problem was to determine what facilitating experiences are present in middle class families that typically do not occur in the lower socioeconomic homes. Through a series of questions and tasks directed to approximately 160 mothers and their 4-year-old children, representing the several income levels, investigators were able to glean some rather interesting data with regard to differences in maternal attitudes toward school, perception of educational purpose, and role in preparing children for learning.

One technique used by Hess to determine perception of school purpose was to ask each mother what she would say to her child on his first school day. Although there were differences of response within class groups, a typical mother from the lower-income home said, "I tell him to do what the teacher says, not get into trouble, not to fight, to come home right after school, and not to get lost." This is a view of school as raising issues of deal-

ing with authority and peers rather than presenting educational content. If learning is mentioned, it is incidental or secondary. Such a response is in contrast to the middle class parent who was likely to say, "The teacher is like mommy, you learn from her; if you have trouble, go to her; you are going to learn to read and write." This approach views school activity in terms of the child's learning experiences.

The female parents were also asked to explain a picture of a teacher and mother in conference. Subjects from the low-income group most often said that the mother had been called in by the school regarding some disciplinary problem; the middle class mother more frequently saw the conference as one in which a parent was coming to consult with her child's teacher about a learning problem. The major difference between these two types of response is in the view of the school as an institution with which the child must cope, as contrasted with a view of the school as a place of learning. The lower class child approaches school unoriented toward learning but attuned to a need of getting along with the institution. School experience is defined to him as a problem of adapting to the teacher and to the peer situation. This presents a misconception of school purpose, with a heavy emphasis upon conformity and physical behavior rather than mental activity.

To ascertain variations in styles of maternal instruction, each parent was asked to teach her child how to assemble a jigsaw puzzle. More often than not, the middle class mother would indicate, "This is a jigsaw puzzle which makes a picture. We remove the pieces and then put them back together so that the picture is complete again. See where all the pieces are, and look at the colors so you will know where they go." Thus, the task was defined; the child had been told how to proceed. Then, spilling out the pieces, the mother gave verbal directions and encouragement as her youngster worked on his task. Mothers of the low-income group, equally supportive of their children, often dumped the puzzle without verbal directions and then said, "You do it." The only guidance offered was in the frequent phrase, "Turn it around, turn it around. . . ." Thirty-five times one mother said this, until finally in defeat and frustration her child replied, "You do it."

Although the mother of the frustrated child was trying to help her boy, she did not know how to teach and was unable to convey the concepts needed to solve his problem. The ability to communicate concepts, to share information, and to program a simple

task is seldom present in the low-income family. However, this is not the only important outcome. Imagine the child in repeated interaction with his mother coming upon problems which he tries to solve but, through lack of maternal assistance, finds it impossible. The reaction of defeat, "You do it," is likely to recur and be magnified many times, resulting in feelings of despair and apathy that some problems cannot be resolved. Compare his response with that of the more favored, middle class child who did not know more about the puzzle to begin with but who through experience realized that with some guidance there was a way to reach a solution. Upon this kind of motivational base, positive attitudes toward new learning may emerge.

MIDDLE CLASS AFFECT

The complex of school problems which arise in the culture of poverty ought not to prompt one to assume that a paragon of home-pupil relations exists in neighborhoods of middle class. Many parents in this segment of society have in recent years adopted an unfortunate shift in emphasis from child development to scholastic achievement. Youngsters who have been prized for themselves and for what they are find early that more adult value is attached to the dimension of academic behavior than any other. This is particularly true in families where parents tend to live through their children as extensions of themselves, hoping somehow to accomplish in the life of their progeny what they, the parents, were unable to accomplish in their own. Thus from the day a child enters kindergarten, grades become a mandate, the report card becomes a status symbol, college becomes a goal.

The student, if successfully indoctrinated, relocates his interest from subject to grade, from the real achievement to the achievement symbol. That this occurs is evident by the premium many parents, especially those of middle class, place upon high marks, often bribing, cajoling, or threatening a child to obtain them. Underlying this pressure imposed on youngsters is the assumption that most if not all can have high marks if they just work hard enough. In many cases this results in a student making lower marks than his intelligence and industry would normally permit him to make, simply because his concern impedes effective concentration. Some whose schoolwork has become grade-oriented are unduly disappointed as they perceive failure to get a certain grade as complete failure and hence lose even that which

is within their reach. The unnecessary anxiety, disappointment, and parental disfavor accompanying report time for these students is a first step toward dropping out.

In spite of these and other deleterious outcomes, the unreal argument persists that competitive marking in elementary and secondary school is a necessary preparation for the type of life children can expect to encounter in our society. This misguided premise fails to account for the fact that competition can only occur within a range of uncertainty, that is, the range in which both success and failure are possible. Competition cannot occur where each participant does not have a chance, where the outcome of victory or defeat is predetermined. The real competitive situations of life are chosen when one perceives a possibility of success. The so-called competition of the school is hardly chosen by children but is forced upon them by compulsory school laws, anxious parents, and ill-trained teachers.

The result of a comparison of the work product of one whose intelligence quotient (IQ) is 85 with that of another whose IQ exceeds 130 ought to be a foregone conclusion. In a sense, school "competition" becomes a daily punishment for those of lesser ability. Under the circumstance where few participants have a chance to win, it is not strange that some students protect themselves by setting a low level of aspiration, that is, by not trying. In a spelldown, for example, some children are pleased if they are not the first to make an error; winning is far from their minds.

Moreover, in competitive situations where immature minds are involved, defeating others becomes more important than doing the task well. In some pupils, competition arouses conflict; the threat of losing or the tension induced by working against others prevents wholehearted participation. Repeated frustration in competitive situations produces a tensional state which makes large demands on a child's emotional balance and may alter his proper relationships with companions, teachers, and parents.

Competition is not the way to bring each person to his full potentiality. By emphasizing the false standard that one should take pride where he excels, we often discourage the pupil from developing his lesser talents. This is especially risky at the elementary level where strengths are only beginning to emerge. Youngsters ought not to be forced to capitalize on just those proficiencies which develop early lest other strengths which might develop later be excluded. Competition should never be made so important that failure to win is emotionally disruptive.

Even for those who can succeed in pursuit of grades, the consequence of attaching excessive worth to academic achievement can be damaging to personal development. For the child, it can lead to fundamental values that depend not on his character, personality, or relations with others but solely on his academic prowess. When a youngster perceives his school success to be the most effective method for evoking parental response and affection, he may be expected to adopt this method. In some families, there is danger that educational attainment to elicit adult approval may replace emotional bases as criteria for personal relations. Moreover, a time comes for each individual when behavior is no longer precocious, when achievement cannot be traded for affection. At that point, those who have used gains in school as their base of affinity for personal associations find they lack the capacity for the intimate relations of adulthood.

Grownups are justly concerned about helping youth become adequate to the demands of an uncertain but not uninviting future. But this goal will not be realized so long as preparation for adulthood is subject to the cultivation of precocity, conditional affection, and adherence to a limited concept of achievement. Affection and approval should be granted for aspects of child behavior other than academic distinction. The goal of education must be broadened from scholastic to personal achievement. Since the only path to maturity is by way of childhood, the future citizen must be a boy before he is a man.

II.
READINESS:
A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

A century ago little attention was given to the view that home and school in concert could best further growth and development of children. No great attempt was made to understand students, and the concept of a school geared to individual differences was yet to be described and practiced. While parents and teachers were mutually concerned with the learning and behavior of pupils, there was little to bring them together into any close relationship. Not until the early 1900's when a series of educational innovations took place was conjunctive effort forthcoming. It was then that Thorndike, James, Watson, and others conducted studies in learning; newly established kindergartens insisted on teacher contact with the homes of students; Binet's tests brought awareness of wide differences in chronological and mental age; Terman contributed to understanding individual differences in relation to school performance; and the field of child psychology was born. These developments gave glimpses of why parents and teachers needed to have such relationships as would make possible an exchange of information and understanding about pupils.

Even today one of the most serious omissions on the educational scene is the lack of important data about individual pupils. Too often information vital to school progress and adjustment is gathered only after a youngster is in serious difficulty. Especially is this true in central city schools which sustain a high rate of pupil mobility. It should be obvious that teaching cannot effectively proceed nor can appropriate learning processes occur in courses where an instructor is unfamiliar with the academic,

emotional, familial, and social history of each class member. Experience in working with schools on the development and use of cumulative records suggests that the following scope of facts is needed to ensure optimum instruction: developmental history; medical and health information; growth information; interpersonal relationships at home; cultural background and socioeconomic status; interaction with peers; test scores of aptitude and achievement; illustrative samples of school work; and observational information such as use of mental processes, attitudes, conduct, values, goals, talents, abilities, adjustment problems, and adjustive patterns.

In Los Angeles, where over 100,000 pupil transfers occur annually, a project known as the "reception room" has been established in two inner city elementary schools. The two schools were selected because they have the highest turnover in the city, with 20 to 25 children entering each week. Most of these children arrive with no school records or background information. In order to facilitate placement and orientation, a full-time teacher for remediation, a full-time testing counselor, and a part-time child welfare and attendance worker for family case work and referral are available to each school. Milwaukee has also given attention to the adjustment problem confronting in-migrant families. With nearly 40 million Americans moving each year, there can be little doubt that programs such as those of Los Angeles and Milwaukee are needed in every urban center.

HOME AND SCHOOL: THE EARLY YEARS

Parents and educators must also join forces to provide all children with adequate preschool experiences. Except for the genetic patterning of physical growth, a human self does not develop through the process of unfolding as some child development books dealing with levels and phases would suggest. Rather, a human self results from the processes of interacting and interrelating. The quality of self produced depends in large measure on the quality of interactions and relationships made available to the individual.

According to Benjamin Bloom, professor at the University of Chicago, the difference between a very favorable environment and an underprivileged environment each year in the first four of a child's life may affect intellectual development by about 2.5 points per year or 10 IQ points over the four-year period. Between ages

8 and 17, extreme environments may have an effect of only 0.4 points per year. Dr. Bloom contends that the cumulative effect of environmental influences during the first 17 years is about 20 IQ points when contrasting deprived and abundant backgrounds as they exist in America today. McCarthy is able to describe some 17 studies showing that environmentally deprived children tend to enter school at a considerable disadvantage when compared with their age-mates from middle and upper classes.

The assumptions that intelligence is fixed and that its development is predetermined by the genes is no longer tenable, writes J. Hunt, University of Illinois. The fixed-intelligence concept has resulted in educators' overlooking the importance of experience at preschool level. Hunt cites research indicating that ability and readiness of parents to answer children's questions and to show affection-approval can make a difference in intelligence. He concludes that we must discover ways to govern the encounters children have with their environments, especially during the early years, in order that as adults they will have higher intellectual capacities than would otherwise be the case.

Recognizing the inadequate life space in which deprived children must function, New York City, Baltimore, and other metropolitan areas have introduced compensatory measures in the form of prekindergarten enrichment programs designed to include a dimension of experiences which are comparable to the background usually brought to school by children from middle class families. The New York City effort, led by Martin Deutsch, has been successful in helping some 240 youngsters, ages 3 to 4, to overcome home conditions that foster alienation from and failure in school. In the program these children have been exposed for the first time to music, art, and books; they are learning size, number, and time concepts. Similarly, the academic handicaps which would otherwise confront boys and girls on entrance to elementary school serve as the focuses of effort in the Baltimore program. Ostensibly, classes in both cities are being prepared for a more adequate chance to compete successfully later in formal academic situations.

Social distance between home and school in low-income communities is at times perpetuated by ineffectual attempts to solicit parental attention and support. These families cannot be expected to gain enthusiasm or insight through lectures, organized meetings, or other formal activities which might demand an unrealistic level of scholarship and concentration. Instead, they

become involved through visits to the home by their child's teacher, individual conferences at school, observation of a classroom lesson, and group discussions with other parents and teachers on problems related to child development.

All of these types of meetings with parents can be more effective with teachers who are trained in conference techniques and procedures. Most instructors need help in conducting effective conferences and are frank to admit it. A survey of 78 elementary teachers made at the end of a year of classroom experience following graduation from Queens College showed that they regarded relations with parents to be their second most difficult problem (discipline ranked first).

An outstanding example of what can happen when school and home work together to raise the achievement level of children is shown in a recent program conducted at Flint, Michigan. Approximately 1,000 Negro children of low-income backgrounds served as an experimental group for the study during 1961-62, to ascertain the effect of familial influence on reading achievement when the home was prompted to aid and encourage learning in this curricular area. This program required parents and teachers to work together to improve children's basic attitudes toward school and to improve academic work habits. Objectives of the plan were carried out by helping parents develop or raise the expectations of their children and provide a home setting conducive to study. Parents were expected to do the following:

- Provide a quiet period in the home each day for reading and study assigned by the teacher. They were told: "This period is to be at a regular time so that it becomes a part of the life of the child. Remind the child of his assignment. Young children will forget."
- Read regularly to their children, including preschool-age children.
- Read regularly in the presence of their children.
- Listen to their children read.
- Show interest in their children's work by asking questions and giving praise when deserved and encouragement when needed.
- Prevent the school-age child's work from being damaged or destroyed by preschool-age children.

- See that the child has pencils and paper at school and at home so that he has the tools necessary for doing a good job.
- Get the child to bed at a regular time each night so that he gets the proper sleep and rest.
- Get the child up each morning with adequate time for a good breakfast.
- Remind the child of work papers, books, etc., that should be returned to school. Young children need this assistance.
- Have the child leave home with the attitude of going to school for the purpose of learning.

Reading tests given in November 1961 and May 1962 indicated that while the experimental group maintained its normally expected growth rate, less substantial gains were made by the control group. Parents were polled by questionnaire and unanimously encouraged continuance of the project. In addition to reading progress, home-school relations have improved.

TEACHER READINESS

Readiness has often been used as the complete and final answer to the school's lack of success with an individual; unfortunately, the individual carried the load of the label and not the school. Could one say that the individual is not ready to satisfy his needs? Somehow the question does not ring true. Could the term *readiness* be used more profitably and meaningfully to assess the school's program or the preparedness of teachers?

The high rates of staff turnover among central city schools in nearly every urban complex lend credence to the assertion that a more adequate type of training is needed by those assigned to such institutions. Certainly there are a number of instructional and behavioral problems indigenous to the role of inner city teachers which occur less frequently in schools of more favored background. Thus, teacher training institutions purporting to equip candidates for positions in almost any type of environment must give more than cursory attention to whatever tasks, difficulties, and procedures appear vital to successful teaching in poor neighborhoods.

Without exposure to and understanding of their forthcoming role in a central school, it is unlikely that teacher candidates will

be able to dispatch their responsibilities in an efficient manner. Consequently, 17 New York City colleges and universities, in conjunction with the city board of education, have recently begun teacher training courses designed specifically for those who intend to work in socially deprived areas. Student teachers have classes in connection with "campus schools" that are located in low-income areas. They observe and participate in demonstration lessons as well as gain information about community mores and behavior.

Prospective pedagogues in the New York programs soon recognize that teacher attitude is the most significant factor in determining successful classroom instruction, that an acceptance of all pupils and their environment is vital. This need for acceptance is well illustrated in classrooms where pupils come from homes in which a poor quality of English is spoken or where English is a second language. In New York City, for example, 11.5 percent of elementary school children either speak English haltingly or not at all. When a teacher rejects or belittles the speech a student brings to school, the object of rejection is not the student alone but his home and the community. It is wise to ponder the dilemma of such a pupil who is frustrated and torn between the world of home and school; if he alters his pattern of speech to conform, he may be scorned at home for "puttin' on airs."

Frequently in homes of the culturally handicapped, language is not a tool. It may be a threat; it may possibly be nonexistent as a medium of communication. Often, the maximum exposure of these children to language has come from the television set—a situation in which the pupil encounters torrents of language, used in situations unfamiliar to him. In addition, no response is expected of him; he is merely an observer, not a participant, in the communication process. Among other skills such a youngster lacks is the attitude that the person getting the story and the information should do some of the work. He does not realize either the nature or extent of participation a receiver must bring to the communication process. Only an understanding and accepting teacher can help him.

The school day often ends in emotional exhaustion for teachers who lack empathy toward their pupils. This effete condition is the common complaint of young, inexperienced instructors whose first assignment is to the slum school. The beginning teacher naturally tends to gauge the extent of his effectiveness by ob-

serving the progress of his pupils. When favorable results are not forthcoming, ego defenses are activated, and in a needless effort to defend self, the teacher projects a cloud of failure onto the child. Perhaps we facilitate this projection by describing these children with adjectives like *underprivileged, handicapped, culturally deprived,* and *disadvantaged* in that although the referent is their environmental limitation, it tends to transfer to an image of less potential. "A major reason for low achievement among children in poor neighborhoods is the low expectation as to their learning capacity held by teachers," reports John Neimeyer, president of Bank Street College, New York City.

Another danger in labeling children according to the environmental limitation of their home and community is that any positive features emerging from life in the circumstance of poverty are obscured and receive no consideration in classroom instruction. When educators fail to use the possible academic strengths of child experience in low-income groups, such strengths become nonfunctional and much of a youngster's competitive potential vanishes. He is expected to compete at a disadvantage by using strengths characteristic of life in middle and upper class families. For example, students from slums have a remarkable degree of independence and seldom need continued adult approval for their actions. As a result, they might well be given responsibilities in the classroom, but under the current system anyone with poor grades is denied such an opportunity.

Studies in New York City have shown some pupils of poor areas to be more cooperative than their peers from better neighborhoods, for having always been at the bottom, they less often seek a scapegoat. It has also been shown that these children have a lengthy interest span for that which is familiar to them. Lamentably, most of the materials in texts, except for the SRA and Follett series, do not represent the type of life to which they have been exposed, so their attention span is unfairly considered shorter than that of middle class children. It is hoped that some of the strengths of children from the culture of poverty may become functional in the school if our aim to encourage and enhance self-esteem is to be realized.

FOSTERING REALISTIC ASPIRATIONS

"A man's reach must exceed his grasp, or what's a heaven for?" Robert Browning understood the importance of goal orienta-

tion in relation to personal development. The poet was aware that the human being who has resigned himself to a life devoid of striving, aspiration, and ambition for personal achievement has resigned himself to the death of attributes which are distinctive elements of human life. Many youngsters in our land will forfeit their future unless their expectation of self can be brought to a point compatible with the demands made of citizens in an industrial society. Therefore, it is essential that we probe the causative factors which give rise to the immobile stance of some young people. Particularly important is an examination of those forces extrinsic to the child which influence his aspirations. Some of these forces are the home, school, peers, and community.

FAMILIAL influence on aspiration is well known, for in the home are developed attitude sets toward personal growth or limitation. Unfortunately, in some families where the educational experience of parents has been less than satisfying, there is a tendency to delimit advantages of learning. Reading and writing skills are seen as demands which the student must fill in order to meet the requirements of society. The extent to which a student is willing to meet these demands often depends on the attitude that he has absorbed in his home. A feeling on the part of some students involved in San Francisco's Special Reading Lab, that learning to read well or to read at all is worthless in value, can be traced to families where there is constant repetition of the theme that no matter how well a student does, he will never be allowed by society to practice his skills. That such an environment tends to diminish the aspiration level of its young is obvious.

Equally disappointing, however, is the increasing number of homes in which unrealistically high aspirations are set for young people. Pupil adoption of these unreasonable goals can result in withdrawal from important areas of child life. Students may experience recurring guilt as they struggle along, living up to desired standards only on rare occasion. At any grade level one may find youngsters with learning disabilities who, after incorporating parental expectations, receive little or no assistance from mother or father in learning how to reach these goals. While concern about the future of their progeny is commendable, there are far too many parents who evidence a total lack of regard for such factors as: Does the child's potential indicate college material? What are his curricular and vocational interests? Are present achievement expectations by his parents in line with the pupil's capacity of performance?

SCHOOLS all too often reinforce unrealistic expectations of the home. Allegiance to the normalization concept leads some educators to an expectancy of how children should think, speak, and feel according to standards of a given age or grade. These norms more often than not, taken as a quantitative index of absolute accuracy, dictate to the teacher how much Johnny can absorb. It is true that not all instructors are guided by the determination of norms, but it is equally true that there are teachers who, acting on the basis of test scores, classify children as potential successes or failures before they ever observe these children perform.

There are always children in any grade who are outside the expectation limits in one direction or another. Those who could function at a higher level than the class expectancy easily come to feel that casual efforts are all they need to express in order to succeed, while others are told in various ways that they are not doing satisfactory work, that they are unsatisfactory persons. Although the aspiration for pupils as held by teachers is not a subject for discussion here, the increasing impersonality of schools cannot be dismissed as a factor.

PEER pressures obviously have an effect upon individual achievement. There are at present a myriad of studies under way to investigate the ways in which youngsters determine or govern aspirations, behavior, and in some measure, the progress of their age-mates. Underlying these research efforts is a hope that we can use peer groups to influence and instruct their membership with even more efficiency than is now the case with use of adult-directed teaching. Especially is this true in the area of attitude development.

The rationale prompting this new interest in adolescent interaction comes largely from cultural anthropology where predictions are being made that the amount and nature of the ways children learn from each other will increase. It is likely that the rate of instructional change will be so great that children being born at this time will find few patterns of behavior of the present adult population which will stand them in good stead when they reach maturity. Hence, children may be forced to turn more and more to each other in working out effective and satisfying patterns of action. It seems proper, therefore, to work toward increased knowledge of the conditions under which peer groups can both influence and reinforce the development of realistic aspirations for their individual members.

COMMUNITIES have a stake in the development of responsible goals for our future citizens. Inasmuch as personal responsibility is a vital element of emotional strength, it is unfortunate that communities have not given more attention to the role of young people in building and maintaining the community in which they reside. Psychologically all beings need identity, want to fulfill a purpose, to contribute, to be recognized, and to be needed. In the United States, almost as if it were by design, we have denied our adolescents the fulfillment of such needs. Improvement of economic conditions has blessed us with mass affluence, but ironically we have been cursed with an inability to maintain the identity of the teenager. In previous times he filled a need, found his place fighting our wars, choring his own farm, marrying into responsibility—in other words he played a role for which he received his applause.

By sharp contrast, the teenager today is asked to hibernate until adulthood in a state of limbo we now term adolescence. He is no longer a child but not yet an adult, uncommitted to any specific occupation or task. He is not made responsible for anything, contributes little to anyone or anything, and as a result, in some instances, stumbles into misadventurous directions seeking a meaning of himself; burns his excess energies in ways that inflame his home and community; rejects and resents the authority that would restrain him; rants, rebels, and cries out to a neurotic wilderness: "There is nothing to do," "No one understands me," "What do we do for kicks?"

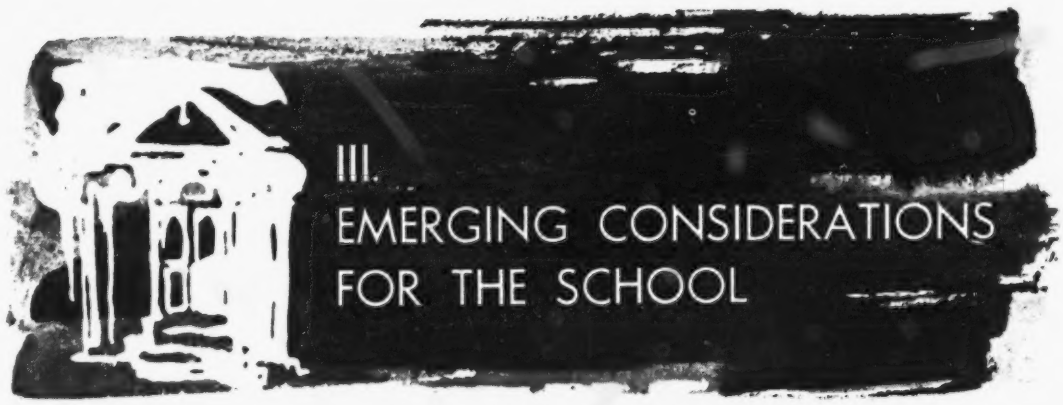
The young person of today has great, undirected energies and seeks ways in which to test his strength and determine his limitations. Though knowledge is gained at an earlier age and adult activities are initiated earlier than ever before, responsibilities are deferred to an ever-later period. While urging the teenager to grow up, we hold him back by assigning counterfeit responsibilities, telling him these are more useful than the real thing. Then suddenly we let the barriers down and demand immediate and successful adult behavior; we seldom get it. Communities must begin to distribute realistic responsibility to their young if we have any expectation of developing civic-mindedness.

At this juncture, it is appropriate to interject the query of what happens when a child is pressured to adopt aspirations for self that have been set by others. Some become overstrivers and announce goals way beyond their past attainment. They are uncertain about what they can really expect of themselves. They

cannot admit inadequacy or discriminate the reasonable from the unreasonable. Lacking confidence, they reduce their anxiety by aiming beyond what they can hope to achieve. It is as though they were to say: "My attainments aren't much, but at least my goals are worthy of praise." And failing to reach lofty goals hardly counts as failure. Thus, if they succeed, their pleasure is great; if they fail, their self-respect does not suffer.

There are others for whom long-continued difficulties lead to hopelessness and withdrawal. These children set goals cautiously, often much below previous achievements, for they have learned that it is better not even to try since repeated experience has produced nothing but failure when they have been compared to their peers in achievement.

It is important to recognize that goal setting reflects personality. A steady but realistic raising of aims is usual among self-confident children who are assured in their performance. They may show pleasure and strong effort, but in a realistic fashion which places social and self-approved limits on their achievement. They do not react with feelings of failure or poor performance on material which is clearly too difficult for them, nor on the other hand do they gloat over good performance on easy material. In contrast, the overstriver lacks a clear self concept, hence is insecure, apprehensive, and inflexible. Those who withdraw appear self-conscious, dissatisfied with themselves, and anxious to take an easy way out. It is interesting to note that the assured pupil strives in response to criticism, whereas the worried, sensitive pupil seems to respond better to praise.



III. EMERGING CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE SCHOOL

For teachers throughout America there is perhaps no problem of greater concern than that of the slow learner. This unsatisfactory term, *slow learner,* has come into general use to designate any individual who is equipped with less than average capacity to learn. Usually students are so classified when, on repeated measures of scholastic aptitude, an intelligence quotient between 80 and 95 is indicated. The relation of this problem to school instruction comes into sharp focus upon recognition that one in five children is a slow learner. This means public schools have the task of providing education for more than 8 million less able pupils whose presence is felt in almost every community in the United States, be it suburb or slum, small town or rural area.

Though any youngster given an adverse circumstance might represent a potential dropout, those children categorized as slow learners could most be considered "predictive dropouts" since it is from their IQ range, more than from any other, that pupils leave school before graduation. Reasons for leaving school most frequently given by such students are lack of interest, inappropriate curriculum, and inability to maintain acceptable grades. Under these conditions, it would appear that to affirm the inability of a slow learner while offering lament for the pupil's disinterest and failure is the least effectual stance educators might assume. A more positive view would involve working toward increased educational relevance for less able pupils by providing them with a realistic curriculum.

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CURRICULUM REVISION

Before the predictive dropout can realize his appropriate educational opportunity, certain archaic views must undergo alteration. Popular acceptance is needed for a concept which allows quality to occur within a framework of quantity. Presently, quality is viewed solely as academic rigor and necessarily is confined to those whose intellectual prowess has been demonstrated. Adherence to this limited view of quality finds expression in schools which perpetuate a restricted formalized curriculum that was appropriate in the nineteenth century when only the so-called cultured few attended secondary schools. When one prescribed then that "everybody" should study certain subjects, *everybody* meant anybody who was somebody, but today the term *everybody* is coming to mean everyone.

Actual revision of courses both in type and content has not kept pace with changes in educational objectives as our schools ostensibly have moved from serving a select clientele to teaching the future body politic. The dimensions of this tragedy are shown in a recent statement by Kimball Wiles, president (1963-64) of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development: "Our present curriculum is inadequate for 15 million students in addition to those who drop out."

It is imperative that school become relevant for all if our graduates are to make a smooth transfer from education to employment, if our predictive dropouts are to remain and graduate. No longer can we ignore the findings of research regarding individual differences in relation to classroom instruction; otherwise we perpetuate a belief that it is easier for youngsters to modify their needs than for the school to change its requirements.

One thing seems certain: If we are to keep all students in school, then all required courses must be designed and taught to meet all ability levels. Unless we can come nearer to this objective in practice, we will continue to have "built in" standards of performance which will force some students out of school. It is precisely in the basic courses of language arts, math, and social studies that antipathy or enthusiasm is nurtured, success or defeat is sealed, dropout or retention is determined.

Curriculum change is not an easy venture, for there are those who prefer to introduce noise rather than improvement. Moreover, current debate about curriculum seldom demands that the major points of view confront one another. As a result, college intel-

lectuals attack popular education in their journals; administrators defend their programs to the school board; and students of curriculum report their research in uncongenial verbiage. Part of this disconnection relates to the fact that we suffer from an odd claustrophobia of occupations and groups in American life—the sense of isolation and insulation that seals off historians from journalists, jazz from longhair, Catholics from Mormons, Republicans from Democrats, and television repairmen from everybody.

Recently, federal intervention was necessary to update curriculum in vocational education. As a result, there is reason to be optimistic about the future of occupational training in secondary schools for all who require it. Even before passage of the Vocational Education Act of 1963 (Public Law 88-210), a number of forward-looking school systems, recognizing that equality of education cannot be achieved through identical courses of study for all, had begun to offer instruction in such new programs as custodial services, shoe repair, barbering, cosmetology, laundering, valet service, elementary nursing, duplicating services, painting, decorating and furniture refinishing, lawn and garden care, small appliance repair, automotive mechanics, filing, family services, and food preparation. Presently, the U.S. Department of Labor is providing leadership in regional programs to ensure that curricular change is in accord with manpower needs.

GRADING CONCEPTS

In the realm of school evaluation the gap between practice and what we know about testing is centuries apart. We follow tradition which dictates that pupils should be measured by comparison with others, although our knowledge of learners and the learning process has revealed that the valid measure is one which assesses growth of an individual in relation to his previous position. Under present operation, "achievement" in the classroom is communal rather than personal.

Assessing achievement by group standard may be likened to the efforts of an Arkansas farmer who sought to determine a fair price on the pig he was placing for sale. In order to determine the weight of his pig, a long pole was balanced across the back fence. To one end of this pole he tied the pig, and on the opposite end he attached a large gunnysack. He filled the gunnysack with rocks until the pole was again in balance, pig and rocks being

of equal weight. Then to determine the weight of his pig, the farmer estimated the weight of the rocks.

To nullify individuality as a criterion for marking is to negate the validity of grades themselves if their purpose is, in fact, to record individual progress. To employ group curves as the standard for an individual's achievement is to guess the weight of the pig or, in our instance, the achievement of the individual. In both cases a pseudo-weight is assigned after first weighing something other than that with which we are concerned. It is fair to say that the concept of individual differences has been employed least in the area where it is most needed; namely, the assessment of achievement. Until individual achievement is based on personal rather than group progress, our schools will continue to perpetuate a fraud on countless numbers of boys and girls.

Alvin C. Eurich, director of the Fund for the Advancement of Education, has proposed that a national organization be created to serve all education levels in providing a system of national standards through country-wide comparison of pupils. Similar proposals are being made by others who suggest that standards of schools would rise if every student were required to demonstrate competence at his grade level before advancing to the next class. Both views overlook the meaning of the term *grade level.*

Grade level is a statistical concept describing the midpoint in the achievement levels of a typical group of students. It guarantees by definition that half of any normal group of pupils will achieve at grade level or above while the other half will achieve at grade level or below. To expect all or even most children to reach grade level or above is to expect an arithmetic impossibility. One might as well argue that 90 percent of those who marry should be women. Marking systems using grade level as a base for evaluation tell the majority of children they are mediocre, some that they are failures, and others that they are doing all there is to do—all of which is likely to be erroneous.

Most state and city studies which come to the National Education Association Project on School Dropouts indicate scholastic failure to be a prime factor in the decision to leave school. In the Iowa study, for example, 84 percent of the male dropouts and 81 percent of the female dropouts were successfully predicted by using grades and intelligence as prime indexes. Unfortunately, even in those instances where predictive dropouts experience satisfaction in learning, they are quickly shown by marks that teacher judgment regarding the extent to which growth has occurred is

substantially lower than their own. In time, ego protection demands a psychological absence from the classroom, and education comes to be viewed as irrelevant. With an increase in dissatisfaction and atrophy, such pupils evolve from dolt to truant to dropout. It is socially sadistic to ask these children to return to a classroom in which they serve only as pawns for the success of others. In a sense, such boys and girls are not dropouts but "squeezeouts."

We must ask ourselves whether grades should be used at all if they tend to distract students from desired educational objectives, if poor grades tend to discourage further attempts at learning, if good grades tend to cause future laziness on the part of the student. Should students perhaps grade themselves so that they can learn to appraise their own achievements and be critical of personal growth? Should grades be based on effort, improvement, performance, or some ultimate standard such as grade level? At this juncture, the only thing clear is that there is no clarity in these matters.

ASSESSING POTENTIAL

When the New York City Board of Education decided to abolish group IQ testing as of September 1964, it acted on a controversy that has long been brewing across America. The "test ban" was in response to charges that exams were middle-class-oriented and so penalized slum children, that scores influenced teacher attitude and unduly fixed student classification. A pertinent query might be: Has the IQ as a measure of potential failed us or have we, in not recognizing its limitations, been overreliant on test scores?

Overemphasis on test results is the common complaint of those opposing present practices. They contend that youngsters who are fortunate to score a high intelligence quotient in the early elementary grades will tend to be favored throughout their school career because teacher expectation for each pupil is usually derived from this singular source. Hence, those who score low are not as likely to be recipients of teacher encouragement, favor, or individual help since their prospect for the future does not appear optimistic.

A frequent danger in the decision-making process regarding grouping for and type of instruction is that the IQ score can become the sole criterion for judgment even though other factors are of equal or greater importance. Ability grouping often amounts

to assignment of the best-trained teachers to classes of pupils with the highest intelligence quotients. Decisions concerning the instructional mode for each pupil would better be made on the basis of diagnostic and achievement tests rather than on an index of potential like the IQ.

Finally, since the IQ is often viewed as a predictor of success or failure, teacher reaction to individual test scores can transfer to grading in the classroom. As a consequence, when those who score low appear to achieve, the product is considered "luck." On the other hand, high-scoring children even when achieving at a low level usually receive good grades either because the teacher assumes extrinsic factors have caused his inadequate performance or simply because it would be difficult to justify a low grade to a youngster of high IQ in view of parental repercussions.

Apart from their measure, it is important to understand the limitations of IQ tests. Since it has been a time-honored practice to establish validity in new measures of intelligence or scholastic aptitude by determining how closely performance on them correlates with performance on the old Simon-Binet or its revisions such as Stanford-Binet, it has been difficult to break away from an all too narrow conceptualization of the human mind. We have been trapped by the definition that "intelligence is what intelligence tests measure."

The dilemma here is that validity refers to evidence of correlation with an existing measure of the same function. There is doubt that all intelligence tests of high validity measure the composite of mental functions. As recently as 1959, J. P. Guilford conceptualized mental functioning to include cognition, memory, convergent production, and evaluation, each of these operating on four content types and six kinds of products. Yet, although some of these functions are not measured in old tests, new exams measuring them cannot depart too far lest they lose validity.

Our trap is self-perpetuated by this circular logic, but noble souls like Getzells, Jackson, and Torrance have departed from the traditional sanctity of error by challenging the "limited mind" concept embodied in existent intelligence tests. Recent studies have shown that if we identify as gifted those scoring in the upper 20 percent on an IQ test, we would eliminate about 70 percent of those who will score in the upper 20 percent on a measure of creativity.

An ability gradient is operating insofar as intelligence tests are concerned. That is to say, if one has enough of whatever

abilities are measured by intelligence and scholastic aptitude tests (say an IQ of 120), having more than enough (over 120) is not as important as having some other abilities such as those considered in tests of creative thinking. The creative thinking abilities include fluency (the ability to produce a large number of ideas), flexibility (the ability to produce a variety of ideas or use a variety of approaches), originality (the ability to produce ideas that are off the beaten track), elaboration (the ability to fill in details), and redefinition (the ability to define or perceive in a way different from the usual, established, or intended way).

There is little doubt that we have depended far too much on the intelligence test to determine mental retardation and giftedness. It has always been the sole instrument used in assessing intellectual potential and mental growth. Unfortunately, we have usually shaped our educational curriculum and methods to bring about the kind of growth or achievement that is related to the mental abilities involved in intelligence or scholastic aptitude tests. Surely our instruction ought not to be determined by our tests of evaluation. This narrow concept of the human mind and its functioning has produced a kind of learning experience which falls short of our ideal of a humane education that will give all children a chance to realize their potentialities. Yet, in measurement, as in all of education, we must preserve what is good and work for what is better; we must make the present contemporary.

LEARNING AND INSTRUCTION

A theory known as faculty psychology dominated both mode and content of education during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The rationale began with a premise that mind is the mental correlate of body; therefore, just as the body has physical qualities, so too the mind must possess psychical qualities. Each of the 35 mind attributes such as memory, judgment, hatred, and understanding were known as faculties. Since to strengthen the body requires muscle exercise, so too the mind's faculties were believed strengthened by exercise through practice and drill. Teachers were assigned their arduous task of exercising those faculties in which strength was desired. Some curricular subjects, because of their difficulty, were deemed better exercisers than others. As a consequence, math and Latin became the *sine qua non* of learning.

The aim of education was to produce a highly trained mind, not necessarily a good one. Knowledge and practical information were thought to come through later experience after one's mind had first been properly trained, disciplined, and strengthened. The more difficult the school tasks, the better suited to this end were they thought to be. Such a view tended to keep practical, useful, and interesting subject matter out of classrooms because these apparently would not produce the show of painful effort by students which more abstract and abstruse mental puzzles could evoke. Effort and difficulty became in a way the standard for judging educational value of a subject.

Because each faculty apparently was unique in rate of growth, it was assumed they could best be trained at separate ages. Memory, for example, appeared teachable at an earlier age than reason, so young children might be expected to memorize though not understand. Early memory training would furnish the raw material or produce an adjunct to reason when the latter faculty came to be exercised in later years. In history classes, emphasis was on remembering famous names and dates rather than understanding cause and significance of events. Similarly, geography stressed the ability to locate obscure and unimportant places rather than gaining insights as to the effect of land and sea upon man's life style.

Under faculty psychology, learning was simply a physical exercise of supposed compartments in one's mind. Students did not understand, they absorbed. In the learning process one was viewed as reactive, not active. He did not think, he listened. Indeed, listening was equated with learning. Even furniture was designed with this in mind as immobile desks held one's body—if not one's attention—in place. The faculty concept died as experimental psychologists showed there could be a faculty for each situation in life.

Modern research indicates that not all learning is just a matter of physical exercise or memory, that practice or drill are not the only modes accommodating growth, that intellectual development and the "disciplined mind" are not necessarily synonymous. Rather, it now appears that several dimensions of learning exist (skill, knowledge, attitudes) each of which may differ from others in structure and in the method most effective for their accommodation. For example, physical skills like football and golf requiring a high habit content for proficiency might well be developed through practice and drill. However, these methods are ineffectual

when applied to teaching knowledge, the intellectual dimension of learning, which appears to increase most efficiently through understanding, seeing relationships, and problem solving.

Unfortunately, "mental discipline" remains one of the objectives for assigning homework. Too often what is evaluated are the answers on homework assignments rather than the processes used by students to derive answers. If in fact the problem-solving method is the objective of intellectual tasks, it ought to be given more than perfunctory attention in evaluating achievement and progress; otherwise homework is not instructive, it cannot be diagnostic, and it is without meaning.

Similarly, methods of habit, practice, and drill which are effective in teaching skills prove questionable when applied to teaching attitudes. Differing from skills and knowledge in their close attachment to emotions, attitudes are learned primarily by emotional experience rather than practice or problem solving. That the methods of identification and internalization are more proper modes in teaching attitudes becomes apparent upon reflection that much of our behavior is determined by how we feel rather than what we know.

Not only is instruction influenced by difference in types of learning, but recent studies suggest that children differ in their preference of learning styles. It seems that inquiry, exploring, and testing are every youngster's "playpen curriculum" and mode of learning up to the time of entrance to school. Then the rules are switched, and the pupil becomes a dependent learner waiting for teacher cues. Evidence shows that some children adopt the authoritative method of learning, are anxious to please their teachers, and respond favorably when correct reaction is rewarded. On the other hand, some children remain committed to the spontaneous style of learning where trial and error, experimentation, and idea modification are utilized. Empirical data seem to indicate that many things, though not all, can be learned more effectively and economically in creative ways than by authority. Indeed, many individuals whose preference for creative learning is especially strong tend to make less educational progress when we insist they learn by authority. The field of creativity, more than any other, opens exciting possibilities for making individualized instruction a reality.

An important component within the matrix of style is learning pace. Among disadvantaged youth, there usually is a relative slowness in performance of tasks which should be considered in as-

signment and evaluation of work. To be slow is not necessarily to be stupid but may mean a child is extremely meticulous, cautious, or careful; refuses to generalize easily; cannot understand concepts without doing something physically, e.g., grimacing, shifting posture, moving hands, or other paralanguage movements. The assumption that slow learners are not bright functions as a self-fullfilling prophecy; for if teachers act as though slow students are dull, they become so.

Up to now educators have maintained a greater commitment to the priority of how teaching proceeds rather than how learning occurs. As a consequence, the paragon of individualized instruction has been perceived as simply a matter of smaller teacher-pupil ratio, more time per child, or better systems of grouping, when in fact individualized instruction can only occur when teaching method is in conjunction with the preferred and most efficient learning style of the student. Ultimately, educators may be able to see "sequence in education" as something that occurs within the individual child.

A sign of maturity for the field of education will be an increasing sense of responsibility for knowing more about learners, their style of accommodation, and the diagnostic measures appropriate to ascertain their weaknesses. Chances are good that the extensive number of "special classes" for pupils in schools throughout this country could be greatly reduced if regular classroom teachers really understood individual children.

IV. UNIQUE ROLE OF THE HOME ECONOMIST

Until recently it was assumed that like other school personnel the home economist could only affect the dropout issue by working to ensure relevant curricular experiences for all pupils. To be sure, this is one way she can be instrumental in preventing apathy or antipathy toward education and the school. However, acting on the rationale that conjunctive home-school efforts are an equally important factor, large cities have designed programs that utilize the home economist as a catalytic agent to conjoin these institutions. A cursory examination of these programs should indicate the unique and significant role incumbent upon those in the field of home economics.

IMPROVING HOMEMAKING SKILLS

In the central city of all large metropolitan areas reside those persons about whom Oscar Handlin wrote his book *The Newcomers*. Coming primarily from rural and Southern regions, these recent immigrants to the big city are comprised of Negroes, Puerto Ricans, and other minority elements. Sustaining a high incidence of disorganization and divorce, newcomer families tend to lack cohesion, support, and affection. Moreover, uprooted from familiar surroundings, they naturally experience an acute sense of physical and social isolation, so that a seeming myriad of difficulties confront them in their attempt to adjust to the complexities of child rearing and homemaking in an urban environment. Lacking the knowhow to cope with necessary tasks of shopping, using money, and preparing meals, such parents tend

to induce dropout by requiring additional sources of economic support. This invariably shows up when, upon reaching adult size, boys and girls are expected to leave school to enter the world of work. While child labor can be lessened by providing job training for parents, there still remain the more difficult issues of stimulating emotional support for children's schooling and transforming the home into a place conducive to study.

The problem is a large one: approximately 8 million people in this country are on relief. Since helping the family helps the child, the Cook County, Illinois, Department of Public Aid began in 1962 a bold and exemplary plan to reduce dropout by providing homemaking education to recipients of economic assistance. It is believed that improved conditions in the homes will enhance support for and reinforcement of school life. Beginning with a small staff of home economists located in a six-room furnished apartment, the program offered two-week courses of intensive training in home management to groups of mothers selected from welfare families. Upon completion of study, graduates were given assignments visiting specific homes in which the Department felt their demonstration of techniques could be helpful. Supervised by a casework staff, these "housekeeping teachers" work a sufficient number of hours per week to support themselves. In many cases, because of mutual status with their pupils, these indigenous instructors are more effective than outsiders might hope to be.

Programs such as these are not unique to the United States. In the 1940's, home economists instituted a homemaking laboratory in Puerto Rico by setting up a model apartment in the first public-housing project on the island. Here, the mothers of impoverished slum families were taught simple methods of improving family maintenance. Success of the program is indicated by the fact that it has been extended to many more housing projects in Puerto Rico.

A somewhat different approach has been taken in Philadelphia at the Ludlow School. Here educators initiated adult evening classes of family living in which the homemaking problems of parents serve as topics of discussion. Parents readily respond to the course content by improving the appearance of their homes as well as adopting more positive attitudes toward teachers. The genuine interest of educators in the welfare of participants resulted in this observation by Ludlow's principal: "As they share their skills with other mothers and fathers, interest in succeeding classes grows and they become conditioned to look to the school

for practical assistance in their daily lives." These initially shy and distrustful parents become accustomed to working closely with teachers and consequently learn to respect the judgment and professional skill of the staff.

ADOPTING EDUCATION AS A VALUE

In 1963-64, parents of children attending Douglas School, located in a low-income neighborhood of Chicago, received letters of invitation to join a regularly scheduled discussion group on their homemaking problems. The various discussion groups, each of which was led by a home economist, included topics such as family finance (earning, spending, and saving money wisely); child care and development (growth patterns, food, clothing, health, and recreation); home improvement and beautification (proper methods of house cleaning, management of time, and making homes attractive and livable); sewing (clothing for all family members; items for the home, such as curtains and slip covers; the selection of patterns, equipment, and material); meal planning and nutrition; and many other activities included in effective homemaking.

High on the list of preferred classes was food preparation. Here the home economist prepared an instruction sheet on substitute ingredients (for a 1-ounce square of chocolate use 3 tablespoons cocoa plus 1 tablespoon fat); an instruction sheet on cooking terms; and another describing a good food plan for children of various ages. Booklets on the wise use of money, prepared by the teachers and consultants, were given to the parents.

In order to develop judgment for wise comparison shopping, standard mail-order catalogs were studied to teach basic mathematical concepts. Teachers also prepared mimeographed booklets containing suggestions on credit and installment buying, emphasizing the importance of economic competence and wise money management. Determining family income was also subject for study.

The growing number attending these group meetings is a measure of progress. Using this contact in which there is high interest makes it possible to increase the confidence of parents in school staff and tie the home more closely into school programs and services. The support these mothers receive from an understanding group of parents facing similar problems helps them to overcome self-defeating attitudes. They discover a new respect for

themselves as parents and as citizens. Finally, the increased knowledge gained from classes lends cohesion necessary to family functioning and improves child motivation and achievement in school.

PRACTICE TEACHING IN PARENTHOOD

Youngsters coming from homes of limited experiential background tend to enter school with negative attitudes and inadequate cognitive preparation. Normally, this necessitates a protracted readiness period during which compensatory experiences occur. Additional measures are needed where desire and capability to succeed in school and life have already been impaired. Occupied with economic survival, parents of these children are seldom cognizant of the need for systematic preparation at home to meet the initial expectations of school. This unawareness persists as students advance through the grades, with the consequence that the home is unable to complement or reinforce classroom activities.

A successful experiment with what might be called "practice teaching in parenthood" was initiated nearly four years ago at the Couzens School of Detroit. Located in a low-income neighborhood, Couzens operates a unique nursery program for youngsters 3 to 5 years old and their mothers. Two classes of 30 children and their mothers are held from 4 to 6 P.M. every other afternoon in facilities of the day kindergarten. Mothers act as teacher helpers in the classroom. This firsthand experience in school objectives and expectations, effective teaching techniques, and beneficial activities for children has enabled many participants to understand better their role as patrons of educational institutions.

Monthly meetings are held at which parents are encouraged to pose problems on child rearing. Depending on the topic, either nursery or home economics teachers act as discussion leaders in exploring such issues as child development, organizing household routines, assistance from related community agencies, home improvement, responsibility at home for children, the home as a school, and economics for the young. The effect of Couzens' program has been to improve parental attitude toward the school through increased cooperation and mutual support for pupil motivation and achievement.

Many home economists believe that training for the responsibilities of parenthood ought not to be deferred until one is an adult. Therefore, some of the more forward-looking programs in

home economics at the secondary level provide nursery laboratories in which teenage girls observe and work with preschoolers. In Arlington, Virginia, both male and female high school students enrolled in the family relations and child development courses have an opportunity to hear regularly scheduled presentations by doctors, psychologists, lawyers, and other esteemed members of the community whose tasks affect the well-being of children. Experience in this context provides teens with a valuable preface to their later role as parents.

THE CLASSROOM INFLUENCE

Considerably more attention has been given to the problems of boys who leave school, in spite of evidence that girls comprise 46 percent of all dropouts. This year approximately 325,000 young women will withdraw from school before completion of senior high studies. Major reasons for the migration, each accounting for 30 percent of the dropouts, will be marriage or pregnancy, inappropriate curriculum, and disinterest in school.

One of the most effective measures of preventing dropout that classroom teachers can employ is to make each course relevant to the interests and needs of young women. This requires an increasing body of subject matter in home economics beyond the traditional food and clothing program. It should include family relationships, child development, family health, food and nutrition, clothing and textiles, housing, home furnishings, and home management. A number of schools are now offering work-study programs to equip girls for employment upon graduation in such fields as cosmetology, elementary nursing, food preparation, and family services.

Staff rapport with individual pupils is also important to holding power since an inevitable outcome of teaching is the influence of the educative process on children's feelings about themselves and their world. Concept of self is particularly important, because its orientation is manifest in the entire range of one's behavior. Depending largely on one's school experience, a student can be made to feel more or less capable, more or less worthy, more or less acceptable. Therefore, positive teacher attitude toward each class member's efforts, progress, and prospects can render more likely a similar image of self by students.

Since many students are unaware of the long-range importance of educational training, it is incumbent upon effective teachers

to relate the significance of learning in our society. In fairness, teenagers should be exposed to the prevailing view among employers that it is generally true that those completing high school will be more able to adjust to the changing demands that are characteristic of a progressing economy. In a sense, the employer is thinking along the lines of Edna St. Vincent Millay who, in her poem, "Conversation at Midnight," wrote:

All creatures to survive adapt themselves
to the changing conditions under which they live;
If they can grow new faculties
to meet the new necessity, they thrive;
Otherwise not; the inflexible organism,
however much alive today,
Is tomorrow extinct.

The rigidity of some persons to adapt to change results in their falling by the way, their extinction in the sense of continued employment. Obviously an employer, engaged in a competitive market, must select only those persons who will not hinder the effectiveness or efficiency of his organization. In short, he is obliged to hire only those people whose success appears predictable—the graduates.

In conclusion, an analogy. Before the year 1500, Spanish coins were inscribed with the words *Ne Plus Ultra*—Nothing More Beyond. After the discoveries by Columbus and others, coinage inscriptions were changed to read *Plus Ultra*—More Beyond. Similarly, the future of our young people has *more* in its course than we who are now adults can imagine. However, whether the years to come are, in fact, what they can be depends in large measure upon an adequate preparation to meet the times. Only educational preparation today will open the door to opportunity tomorrow—every child must be provided a key!

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